

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran, Iran**

*November 4, 2009*

Thirty years ago today, the American Embassy in Tehran was seized. The 444 days that began on November 4, 1979, deeply affected the lives of courageous Americans who were unjustly held hostage, and we owe these Americans and their families our gratitude for their extraordinary service and sacrifice.

This event helped set the United States and Iran on a path of sustained suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation. I have made it clear that the United States of America wants to move beyond this past and seeks a relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran based upon mutual interests and mutual respect. We do not interfere in Iran's internal affairs. We have condemned terrorist attacks against Iran. We have recognized Iran's international right to peaceful nuclear power. We have demonstrated our willingness to take confidence-building steps along with others in the international community. We have accepted a proposal by the International Atomic Energy Agency to meet Iran's request for assistance in meeting the medical needs of its people. We have made clear that if Iran lives up to the obligations that every nation has, it will have a path to a more prosperous and productive relationship with the international community.

Iran must choose. We have heard for 30 years what the Iranian Government is against; the question now is what kind of future it is for. The American people have great respect for the people of Iran and their rich history. The world continues to bear witness to their powerful calls for justice and their courageous pursuit of universal rights. It is time for the Iranian Government to decide whether it wants to focus on the past, or whether it will make the choices that will open the door to greater opportunity, prosperity, and justice for its people.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Persian language version of this statement.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Iran, American Embassy in Tehran, 30th anniversary of seizure.

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